

# A JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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Edited by James L. Clifford  
Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.

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Your editor must apologize for the tardiness of this issue. His only excuse is that the exigencies of accelerated undergraduate teaching, including an interim vacation course which met eleven times a week, together with alarms and rumors of alarms of approaching hordes of army trainees, left few moments for scholarly concerns.

And now that the army has finally arrived in force there will be even less time for the humanities. But we on the home front should certainly not complain, particularly since many of our members are making so much greater sacrifices of time and energy. Those of us who are not able to go into active service can at least give all our time to train technical men for the armed forces.

The News Letter may indeed be thinner and more irregular in the coming months, but it will continue to appear somehow, sometime, if only to carry news of the whereabouts of our members.

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## 1943 PROGRAM

It is the expressed wish of the National Office that M.L.A. groups arrange programs for a possible general meeting next December. While everyone realizes that the possibility of holding such a meeting is very remote, it is felt that our organization should attempt to carry on in as orderly and regular a manner as possible; and listing a program is one of our regular duties.

What seems to be the best arrangement to the officers of Group VIII, as well as to those in numerous other groups, is to let the program announced for 1942 stand for 1943. Those who have gone to the great labor of preparing pap-

ers should be given the right and privilege of presenting their results at the first opportunity.

In case a meeting of some sort is held, and any of the speakers cannot attend, his paper may be read by a proxy. Thus we will tentatively expect the papers listed in the last printed program to be given at the first scheduled general meeting.

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## GROUP VIII COMMITTEES

Through a slight mistake, the list of committees for Group VIII, as published in the P.M.L.A. Supplement, was not exactly the one determined upon last winter by the new Chairman. The corrected version is given below:

Advisory and Nominating: Dixon Wecter, Chairman, J. M. Osborn, Henry Pettit, F. A. Pottle, George Sherburn, W. D. Templeman.

Bibliography: Arthur Friedman, Chairman, A. T. Hazen, H. T. Swedengren, Jr., J. E. Tobin.

Research Projects: A. D. McKillop, Chairman, R. C. Boys, E. L. McAdam Jr., M. K. Woodworth.

As will be seen, Homer Caskey, "Pete" Jones, and R. P. Bond, all of whom have served devotedly as officers and committeemen of Group VIII for many years, have temporarily given up active participation while they are in the armed forces. We sincerely look forward to the day when they will be back in the harness again. Also we wish to express deep appreciation for the many years of service of Margery Bailey, who has retired from the Research Committee.

In those days keeping a workable organization together is obviously no easy task. For example, even since the above original listing was made other committeemen

have also received commissions, and further changes will probably have to be made. We hope that no one will feel that this reshuffling of committee membership under the stress of wartime conditions is unfair or unpatriotic, for we are merely following the expressed desire of the National Office that group activity be kept as alive as possible. In order to do so it is necessary to try to keep on the committees enough scholars who are certain not to be called into active military service. While some of our members generously serve on the war fronts, others will try to keep alive some semblance of the old existence we have all helped to fashion.

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#### NEWS FROM ENGLAND

We are deeply grieved to learn of the death on April 14 of one of the most enthusiastic English Johnsonians, Harold W. Bromhead of Streatham. As late as last November he had read a paper before the Johnson Society of London describing the Thrale house at Streatham and its furnishings. As his daughter, Miss Freda Bromhead, puts it in a recent letter, "He certainly was able to impart his own enthusiasm for anything concerned with that household."

In February he had a slight stroke, but rallied somewhat, and was able throughout March to be at his own home, happy with his favorite books and pictures. In April the end came, but even in his last days his interest in Johnson and the Thrales remained as strong as ever.

Your editor vividly remembers his own first visit to Streatham, when happily he met the man who knew more about the suburb's history than any other local authority. Professionally, Bromhead was an art expert and dealer in paintings, but in late years his chief interest has been in the Streatham Antiquarian and Natural History Soc-

iety, of which he was the Hon. Sec. and Treas. For this organization he has published numerous articles, arranged historical pagents, and even projected a complete history of the locality -- alas! left uncompleted! In 1932 he was the author of a very interesting little brochure entitled The Heritage of St. Leonard's Parish Church Streatham, which included much valuable information.

Bromhead was the perfect example of the best type of amateur antiquarian -- not the dry-as-dust mole so often pictured in the caricatures, but the friendly, charming, man of the world and business man, with a consuming interest in the past. To him the 18th century was vital, fascinating and real. And to anyone who was privileged, as was the writer, to be taken by him on a personally conducted tour of the crypt of St. Leonard's Church, the dusty bones of the past were clothed with actual flesh and blood.

Throughout the years since that first meeting we have spent many pleasant days together, and have argued many a debatable scholarly point, both over a luncheon table in busy London and in long letters which had to cross the Atlantic. Now he is gone, and your editor laments the loss of a staunch friend and able co-worker. Certainly his passing is a distinct loss to serious 18th century antiquarian research.

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Dr. Henry Guppy, the Librarian of the John Rylands Library in Manchester England, in a recent letter tells of the difficulties of continuing work at that institution. "My staff is sorely depleted, for nine have been claimed for the army, but the most devastating blow fell upon me less than a month ago when my sub-librarian, Guthrie Vine, who has been my right hand for 42 years, dropped dead in his garden, and leaves me desolate."



"Dr. Taylor is in the navy and has just been granted a commission. He has had a long and gruelling training but he has made good."

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#### QUERIES

E. G. Cox (U. of Wash.) writes: "I wonder if any of the readers of the News Letter knows William Green's The Art of Living in London -- whether it is a poetical description, or one of the belated warnings against the cozeners lying in wait for the yokels, and when it was published. And who was William Green anyway?"

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#### MEMBERS IN SERVICE

W. M. Crittenden (Temple) is now a Lieutenant in the U.S.N.R., stationed at Chapel Hill.

R.T.Fitzhugh (Maryland) is a Lieutenant in the U.S.N.R., but unfortunately we do not have late word of where he is stationed. Just before leaving academic ranks he brought out his book, Robert Burns, His Associates and Contemporaries (more of this another time).

Henry Pettit (Colo.) is another of our group a Lieutenant in the Naval Reserve. His temporary address was 100 Morningside Drive, New York City. He writes: "Uncle Toby will have nothing on me from now on. I'll take him on in any black board fleet engagement with no quarter asked and pipe him aboard with lillibullero and two side boys."

Maury Quinlan, the author of Victorian Prelude, is now stationed at Lehigh Univ., studying in the Army foreign language program.

We have another very delightful and amusing letter from Gale Noyes (Brown), now stationed at Gainesville Florida, and can't resist quoting from it.

He writes: "By the way, you should get interesting letters on the subject of the humanities (We're sorry to say we haven't yet).... There have been lots of wars before, and the humanities have always snapped back. It amuses me somewhat to find that George Anderson at Brown is combining Anglo-Saxon and Chaucer with Navigation and Math, but Kitty always said that any man he produced could teach anything -- with six weeks' notice. I always begged for seven... preferring to apply a little of my time to the keyboard of the Mason & Hamlin." What about it, you Harvard men? Do you find the Kittredge training just what you need to teach Calculus and Physics?

He comments on his winter's stay at Breckinridge, or "Camp Shoeshine," as the soldiers call it. "Our inspections have been so tough that in desperation we have taken to polishing the soles of our shoes. The only test most of us pass is the Wassermann...I have had enough blood drawn from my arm to provide plasma for the casualties of the German army on the steppes of Russia -- and all the time I have needed transfusion after transfusion. But from him who hath not, according to Second Army doctrine, it shall be taken. It's been a life and a half, and I often wonder what the "pill-rollers" do with all that gore. But I do not wish to seem Smollettian this fine morning or to recreate the siege of Carthage."

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An interesting article by one of our members, which might possibly be missed by many readers, is "The Poet as Patriot -- Shakespeare to Wordsworth", by A. D. McKillop, in The Rice Institute Pamphlet for October, 1942.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

E.G. Cox, who brought out two volumes of A Reference Guide to Literature of Travel in 1935 and 1938, is at work on some additional volumes. At the request of your editor he has written to describe what they will contain.

In brief, he is trying to sort out and classify according to some usable plan the record of British endeavors to get acquainted with the topography of their own land and the antiquities of their past. The work will include some twenty sections, many of which may seem to overlap somewhat, but any lack of sharp definition seems unavoidable from the very nature of the subject.

The main section will be devoted to Tours, both by native and foreign visitors. Among the other sections to be considered are: Histories and Antiquities; Ecclesiastical Accounts, Abbeys, Churches, etc.; London; Topographical Views; Aids to Travellers; Communications by Canals and Rivers; Agriculture and Husbandry; Natural History; Spas; Histories and Chronicles; Letters, Diaries and Memoirs containing Travel Accounts; Works of General Reference etc.

All of these will be provided with annotations, and will be arranged, as in the other volumes, in chronological order according to publication. After 1800 titles admitted will be those of first printing of a MS work or modern reprints. Each section will be introduced with a brief preface, and the whole will be provided with a complete index of names etc.

Surely, this will be a reference tool of great value to all of us. We hope it will not be long delayed.

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## AN INTERESTING PREDICTION

Among the lesser known 18th century predictions of modern air combat is a Latin exercise written by Thomas Gray in 1737. The whole poem, Pete Jones has explained,

had to do with an imaginary voyage to the moon, a favorite subject of the time. The following is an English translation of a passage near the end:

The time will come, when thou  
shalt lift thine eyes  
To watch a long-drawn battle  
in the skies,  
While aged peasants, too amazed  
for words,  
Stare at the flying fleets of  
wond'rous birds,  
England, so long mistress of  
the sea,  
Where winds and waves confess  
her sovereignty,  
Her ancient triumphs yet on  
high shall bear,  
And reign, the sovereign of  
the conquered air.

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## THE HYPHEN WAR

We have had a number of answers to our plea for help in deciding about Rudolf Kirk's query whether there should be a hyphen in "News Letter" on our masthead. J. R. Moore (Indiana) writes vigorously that there should be no hyphen, according to 18th century usage; and yet W. H. Bonner (Buffalo) is inclined to agree with Kirk. What do you think? Next time we will give the complete results of the survey.

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## HOW TO START AN ARGUMENT

Try this one on some of your friends of the romantic persuasion. When referring to the recent edition of the poetry of Pope, a writer in the New York Herald Tribune -- Books, for Feb. 28, 1943, under "Reprints, New Editions", makes the following statement: "He [Pope] emerges also as, I am convinced, the greatest English poet after Shakespeare."

There! That's a claim to make the hair of any self-respecting Shelley enthusiast stand on end. But don't blame us if the resulting explosion brings out an ARP demolition squad.